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Director of
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Intelligence

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EL SALVADOR: Political Tensions Ease

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The danger of a coup attempt by rightwing military officers has decreased for now. (S)

[redacted] that far-right leader D'Aubuisson and his supporters appear to be backing away somewhat from their strident antigovernment statements of last week. In addition, dissident Lt. Col. Ochoa has said he will leave this week to begin his assignment in Washington. ~~(S NF NC OC)~~

The chances of further coup plotting will depend largely on whether Defense Minister Garcia decides to resign soon, [redacted]

[redacted]. Garcia has failed to strengthen his military power base since his political confrontation with Ochoa last month, and many key unit commanders and junior officers reportedly want the Defense Minister to honor his pledge to step down. President Magana has appointed a six-man military commission to determine where improvements can be made in the management of the war and administration of the armed forces. ~~(S NF NC OC)~~

The battlefield situation, meanwhile, remains unchanged. The Army is continuing its counterinsurgency campaign in northern Morazan Department, and guerrilla factions on various fronts are attacking towns, public utilities, and military targets. ~~(S)~~

Comment: Garcia probably will resign if President Magana and a majority of senior officers ask him to do so. Such a request could come soon if the military commission concludes that Garcia's resignation would reunify the officer corps and improve the Army's conduct of the war. ~~(S)~~

The insurgents are well informed about current problems in the military and the government, and they are likely to continue their offensive for at least several more weeks. They recognize that their actions coincide with the Pope's impending visit to Central America, ongoing regional discussions about negotiations, and the aid certification debate in the US Congress. ~~(S)~~

~~-CIA, DIA, NSA-~~

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